

Cut foreign aid and spend more on defence, May told by ministers

By Gordon Rayner POLITICAL EDITOR

A CABINET split has opened up over plans to cut foreign aid spending to free up more money for Britain's defences. Ministers are urging Prime Minister Theresa May to drop Britain's commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of national income on helping poorer countries. They want to see the defence budget, which amounts to two per cent of Gross National Income (GNI), increased to three per cent. It would be justified by arguing that money spent on helping trouble spots to fight terrorism should count as foreign aid.

The UK spends £19 billion a year on foreign aid, making it the world's third-biggest donor. Some ministers point out that the average spend by other wealthy nations is 0.4 per cent of GNI. America spends just 0.18 per cent.

Philip Hammond, the Chancellor, has already indicated the law requiring 0.7 per cent to be spent on aid will be reviewed before 2020, as part of a re-examination of all areas of spending.

Mrs May has made it clear she supports the 0.7 per cent pledge and remains "fully committed" to it despite pressure to reduce it after a series of scandals over where the money goes.

Priti Patel, the International Development Secretary, sees the commitment as a key part of the post-Brexit "global Britain" brand. However, a

Whitehall source said: "A lot of the world's biggest problems, such as disease, mass migration and terrorism, are incubated in countries affected by conflict, such as Somalia, Yemen and South Sudan.

"By shoring up security in those countries, you can help to prevent those problems at source and 50 per cent of DFID's (Department for International Development) aid money already goes to those countries."

Julian Lewis, chairman of the defence select committee, said: "As recently as 1996, the year before Tony Blair became prime minister, three per cent was the defence spend, so it is a perfectly reasonable suggestion.

"We keep hearing stories about desperate bureaucrats trying to find ways of spending a fixed sum of money that they are obliged to dispose of."

Sources within DFID point out that the department and the Foreign Office already share responsibility for a conflict, security and stability fund that spends money in Syria, Afghanistan and other countries which constitute a threat to the UK.

There is also cross-party support for the 0.7 per cent spending pledge.

A Government spokesman said: "This is pure speculation. As a global, outward-looking country, we take our international responsibilities seriously and remain fully committed to them."

Corbyn 'burying head in sand'

By Laura Hughes POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JEREMY CORBYN has been accused of "burying his head in the sand" by his own MPs after it was revealed that only 45 per cent of Labour voters believe he would make a better prime minister than Theresa May.

Among all voters, 14 per cent said they would back the Labour leader, while 47 per cent chose Mrs May, according to the Opinion survey for *The Observer*. Yesterday Labour MPs ac-

cused Mr Corbyn of refusing to take responsibility for his "terrible personal ratings" and called for new leadership.

Neil Coyle, the MP for Bermondsey and Old Southwark, said: "Only he can address the problem but has chosen to bury his head in the sand. Labour voters deserve better leadership."

A separate ComRes survey put the Tories 21 points ahead of Labour, at 46 and 25 per cent - the biggest lead for the party in government since 1983.

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Good news The Archbishop of Canterbury used his Easter sermon to criticise the epidemic of fake news. Justin Welby said the public had become used to facts "being reduced to the level of opinion". He spoke as the Royal family attended an Easter service at St George's chapel at Windsor Castle, *right*. Theresa May also attended a service at St Andrew's church in Sonning, Berkshire, *left*.

Methodists gathered on Tunstall Hill overlooking Sunderland at sunrise yesterday, *above*.

The Archbishop, who

posed for a selfie after the service in Canterbury, *top*, said that Christians who had been targeted by terrorists in Egypt would continue to celebrate Easter because of the reality of the resurrection. Last week, 45 people died when St George's church in the Egyptian town of



Tanta and St Mark's in Alexandria were bombed by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

The Archbishop said: "So individualised are our news cycles that our opinions are in themselves the only facts that seem to count. However, what brings the faithful out to worship in Tanta and Alexandria is truth. It happened." In his Easter address, Pope Francis also referred to violence in the Middle East, condemning Saturday's attack on a convoy of Syrian evacuees near Aleppo.

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Commuters are walking a marathon every fortnight

3.5m workers clocking up 2.6 miles a day as they run from train to desk, enough to meet fitness targets

By Sarah Knapton SCIENCE EDITOR

COMMUTERS are far more active than they realise with one in nine walking the equivalent of a marathon every fortnight, a study has indicated.

Research by Macmillan Cancer Support found that 3.5million workers spend 40 minutes a day walking to and from their office, including between trains, climbing escalators and getting to and from stations and bus stops.

Their total daily distance equates to 2.6 miles a day, while the typical daily commuter spends 28 minutes on foot.

This includes eight minutes standing, 12 minutes walking, five minutes climbing stairs or escalators - and even three minutes running.

Macmillan carried out the survey of 1,221 people ahead of its OutRun May challenge in which people are encouraged to raise money by setting running goals. The charity says the survey re-

person. Therefore, the study suggests that for more than 10 per cent of people, their daily commute is enough for good health. With 40 minutes of daily activity, they will also easily meet their 150-minute target for moderate to vigorous exercise each week.

Recent research in Norway by experts on ageing also suggests that a vigorous commute could help stave off the effects of sitting in the office all day.

Fit people were found to have the best heart health - even if they were sedentary for up to 13 hours a day.

"Our Western lifestyles necessarily involve a lot of sitting and we spend more and more time sitting on average as we age," said Dr Silvana Sandbakk, from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

"But our findings show that being fit plays an important part in successful ageing and may lend protection against the negative health effects of being sedentary."

Macmillan carried out the survey of 1,221 people ahead of its OutRun May challenge in which people are encouraged to raise money by setting running goals. The charity says the survey re-

sults highlight just how unaware people are of their daily exertion getting to and from work.

Such is the strenuous nature of our commute that workers often feel as though they have had a workout afterwards, the research found.

For nearly one in eight employees (12 per cent), the daily commute is the most they move all day. After getting home, workers ideally like to spend nearly two and a half hours (149 minutes) sitting down watching television.

OutRun May will encourage thousands of runners to set themselves a total distance to run gradually throughout the month for the charity.

Lisa Shorter, national events manager for Macmillan, said: "Many people dream of being able to do a marathon and this shows commuters are much more active than they may realise."

"But after an energetic commute, we can see many workers are spending the rest of their day sat down, both at work and at home."

"If workers can do a marathon every fortnight without even realising it, we can't wait to see what they can do when they set themselves a goal."

Smart bandages that warn doctors if wound is infected

By Sarah Knapton

SMART bandages which can detect how well a wound is healing and send a progress report to doctors will be trialled within a year, scientists have said.

The dressings are impregnated with tiny sensors which can pick up blood clotting or spot infections and wirelessly send data back to a clinician.

Swansea University, which is hoping to start using the bandages, said the technology could deliver personalised medicine. Patients with wounds are currently advised to return to the doctor at an agreed time. But different wounds may need a longer time to heal, or may have become infected.

Prof Marc Clement, chairman of the Institute of Life Science at Swansea (ILS), said: "Nanotechnology allows us to produce sensors to reduce the dimensions so that they are very small."

"They could be on an intelligent dressing. The next thing is to make those dressings at a cost that is afford-

able for the health service. Clearly the most effective way of doing that is through a [5G] printing technique."

The smart bandage would also connect to the patient's smartphone which can keep track of other health concerns that could be preventing healing, such as inactivity or diet.

"Sometimes we revere doctors so much that we tell them all is well but all of the evidence is there before them in this 5G world, so the clinician and patient can work together to address the challenge," Prof Clement told the BBC.

Other scientists at the University of California have been testing dressings that use sensors to pick up tissue damage and hope they could prevent patients from suffering bedsores.

Other researchers have created hydrogel films embedded with sensors that could send a drug to a wound. LED lights can warn patients and doctors about changes in different areas. Medication can then spread across the bandage through tiny passageways.

THE Monty Python actor Terry Jones still enjoys long walks and a good joke despite living with dementia, his close friend Michael Palin has said.

Jones, 75, who directed *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, is suffering from a form of dementia that affects his ability to communicate.

Palin said Jones continued to enjoy aspects of life that he always had. "Terry still goes on very long walks across Hampstead Heath, often following the most obscure routes, and it is very hard to keep up with him," he said.

Palin told *The Observer* Jones had not lost his sense of humour and matter-of-fact manner.

He said: "The thing that struck me was how Terry reacted to his diagnosis. He was very matter of fact about it and would stop people in the street and tell them: 'I've got dementia, you know. My frontal brain lobe has absconded'."

"He knew exactly what was affecting him and he wanted to share that knowledge because that is the way Terry is."



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